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CU anti-CIA group vows to 'intensify' campaign

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Organizers of last spring's protests against Central Intelligence Agency recruiting at the University of Colorado vowed Monday to "intensify" demonstrations this fall unless CU officials establish a board of inquiry to govern recruitment on campus.

Community in Action, the Boulder coalition that organized the protests, is gathering signatures on a petition asking CU officials to set up the board. As the petition describes it, the board would establish "ethical principles" to govern the use of CU facilities for recruitment, would monitor potential violations and would report its findings next fall.

When the board is in place, the "first case it considers" should be that of the CIA, the coalition said in its petition.

In a letter dated Monday, leaders of the coalition asked top CU officials to "temporarily disinvite" the CIA from recruiting on campus until the board is formed and conducts its inquiry. The letter was addressed to Gordon Gee, president of CU; William Baughn, chancellor of the Boulder campus; and Kaye Howe, vice chancellor for academic services at Boulder. The petition is addressed to the same three officials.

Howe said Monday that the three had not yet discussed the documents. However, she said, "in general the purpose of such a board of inquiry would be to exclude certain activities from the campus," which she said would be "counter to the idea of an arena of open ideas." She said students are not being forced to talk to CIA recruiters, and neither would the University keep students away from them.

CIA recruiters are scheduled to arrive on campus Nov. 18 for one day of recruiting. Agency officials agreed last summer to confine their visit to one day in an attempt to limit the scope — and expense — of the expected demonstrations.

In April, agency recruiters spent three days at Willard Hall on campus,

where they interviewed about 140 applicants. Each day, groups of nonviolent protesters tried to enter the building to make "citizens' arrests" of the recruiters. University police made 478 arrests during the three days, but all charges were dropped.

Kevin Harris, a student leader of Community in Action, declined comment Monday on what form the protests would take in November if CU officials refuse to grant the coalition's demands for a board of inquiry.

If University officials agree to create the board but still permit the CIA to recruit on campus, the coalition will organize protests "at the same level" as last spring, Harris said.

The petition asks that the board include representatives of the faculty, students, staff and administration, all "selected by their own constituencies."

Protest leaders made a similar request last spring after the demonstrations. They say the petition drive will show widespread support for the idea.

The petition is the latest move in a campaign against what the protesters describe as CIA-sponsored terrorism in Central America.

The agency's actions include "the documented murder, torture and rape of tens of thousands of human beings by the CIA-trained contras in Nicaragua and right-wing death squads in El Salvador," Harris alleged in a statement presented Monday at a press conference.

Harris described CIA recruiting as an extension of those crimes. "The agency murders

people," his statement said, "and all the jobs in the agency assist murderers, from the engineer to the clerk, from the physicist to the translator."

Harris denied that the exclusion of CIA recruiters from campus raised questions of free speech or of the University's openness to ideas. He said members of his coalition are willing to debate the CIA on campus.

Although CU is the protesters' current battleground, their goals are not limited to the University. If campus officials were to order CIA recruiters to leave, agency spokesmen have said in the past that they would conduct employment interviews at some other location in Boulder, such as a nearby hotel.

If that happened, Harris said Monday, "we'd probably follow them."